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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 518
By Chumney

A RESOLUTION relative to women's health.

WHEREAS, for many years, the topic of women's health has primarily dealt with reproductive health, and only recently has the focus expanded to encompass all aspects of wellness and disease, including prevention and treatment; and

WHEREAS, for too long, public health policy in the United States has failed to recognize the unique nature of women's health in contrast to men's health, which has resulted in the health of women being neglected; and

WHEREAS, while many people think of cardiovascular disease as a man's disease, more women than men have died as a result of cardiovascular disease every year since 1984, with heart disease being the leading cause of death in women in the United States; and

WHEREAS, women are twice as likely as men to suffer from clinical depression; more than eleven million American women suffer from clinical depression every year; and

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WHEREAS, cancer is the second leading cause of death in American women who suffer from many different types of the disease; the incidence and mortality rate of many cancers are different in women compared with men, with many cancers proving to be fatal; and

WHEREAS, results from the National Health Interview Survey show that self-reported cases of women who suffer from asthma increased an astonishing eighty-two percent from 1982-92, compared with a twenty-nine percent increase in men; and

WHEREAS, not only is the self-reported incidence for women increasing at a faster pace, but the rate of hospitalizations is also higher for women than men in most age groups; and

WHEREAS, schizophrenia occurs equally in women and men, but the onset of the illness generally occurs at a later age for women than for men, the result of which is that the disease has a greater impact on women with more developed families and careers; and

WHEREAS, osteoporosis is the loss of bone mass and deterioration of bone tissue, leading to enhanced bone fragility and an increase in the risk of fracture; and

WHEREAS, this bone loss can be extensive, and over a woman's lifetime, she may lose up to fifty percent of her trabecular bone, which is concentrated in the vertebrae and at the ends of long bones, the primary site of osteoporotic fractures; a woman suffering from this debilitating disease can also lose up to one-third of spinal bone mass in the first six years following menopause; and

WHEREAS, it is no secret that activities which focus on wellness and prevention are two important elements to better health and yet, women are not taking advantage of these opportunities to improve their health; and

WHEREAS, until very recently, women were significantly underrepresented in clinical trials of drugs, due in large part to concerns about the impact of drugs on their reproductive health, particularly on fetal health in pregnancies that might begin during trials; however, it is

now recognized that results from male-only trials may not apply equally to women or provide data on effects important to women; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That we hereby urge Governor Don Sundquist and the Department of Health to continue to make women's health a priority in this state, and encourage all state health programs, including those administered by the Bureau of TennCare, Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation, and the Department of Commerce and Insurance to diligently seek to serve the health needs of Tennessee women, and to aggressively educate them of their unique health needs.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That enrolled copies of this resolution be transmitted to Governor Don Sundquist, the director of the Bureau of TennCare, the commissioner of the Department of Health, the commissioner of the Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation, and the commissioner of the Department of Commerce and Insurance, with this final resolving clause being deleted from such copies.